



CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

The Connecticut State Police Union represents approximately 876 State Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants. We are submitting this testimony **in FAVOR** of:

S. B. BILL NO. 164

AN ACT INCLUDING CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "PERSONAL INJURY" UNDER THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATUTES.

The Connecticut State Police Union membership takes great pride in protecting all Connecticut citizens and visitors, however many times it comes at a significant personal sacrifice. Often, First Responders are forced to witness alarming scenes that forever live in their minds, even long after they retire.

Post-traumatic stress disorder has the potential to occur after exposure to critical incidents or traumatic/shocking events. These critical incidents involve a perceived or actual threat of death or serious injury to oneself or others. As first responders we not only live with the daily stress of potentially losing our own lives, but we are required to witness the death, injury, violence and trauma to members of the public. As a result, First Responders have an increased risk of PTSD because of the repeated exposure to these incidents, potential to interfere with his or her ability to perform his or her duties. At times, it is extremely difficult to be repeatedly exposure to death, dismembered body parts and/or human remains, expecially when it involves a child or infant.

Many First Responders view themselves as "tough" and may even act as if nothing affects them. Many mask the pain with humor, refuse to discuss it for fear it may appear "weak" or even resort to other resources to alleviate the pain. Some first responders that suffer from PTSD may have nightmares or may even repeatedly relive the event in their mind. The results of these experiences are directly linked to the performance of our duties and any "injury" either physical or mentally, should be protected by state statute. In order to ensure that first responders are able to properly respond and provide public safety, we need our legislative leaders to make sure when we are in need of assistance, it will be provided without penalty.

Based on the foregoing, we respectfully request this Committee to pass this legislation.

February 25, 2019

CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

John Castiline - President